

More Volunteers in Football Clubs.

An evaluation of a method to increase the number of volunteers

Mariëlle Splinter¹, Benjamin Egli¹, Torsten Schlesinger¹, Siegfried Nagel¹

¹Institute of Sport Science, University of Bern, Switzerland

An increasing number of clubs experience difficulties in recruiting and retaining sufficient numbers of volunteers to manage and staff their clubs (Lamprecht, Fischer, & Stamm, 2012). In order to facilitate volunteer recruitment, sport clubs need a specific strategy to recruit and retain volunteers for both formal positions and ad hoc tasks. Therefore, the intervention “More Volunteers in Football Clubs” was designed and its impact was evaluated in detail. The question this evaluation research wants to address is: Can football clubs recruit and retain volunteers successfully by implementing the intervention “More Volunteers in Football Clubs”?

The designed intervention is based on the different expectations and needs of volunteers, as well as non-profit human resource management and organizational development management, with a strong emphasis on club-specific counseling and support. Task forces of the twelve participating football clubs attended four workshops in which they received tailor made counseling to reach the desired number of volunteers.

The intervention has been implemented and its effectiveness tested in cooperation with the Swiss Football Federation with twelve Swiss football clubs following a pretest, intervention, posttest design. Data have been gathered and analyzed using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Outcome measurements are: volunteer rate, number of recruited volunteers, number of filled volunteer positions and volunteer satisfaction. Four months after the intervention all clubs that completed the proposed intervention were successful in recruiting the desired number of volunteers. Further, all participating clubs found the intervention helpful and would recommend other clubs to participate as well. With the development of this practical intervention a solution for football clubs is provided to overcome the difficulties in recruiting and retaining sufficient numbers of volunteers.

Keywords: volunteers, football, intervention, organization development, evaluation

References

Lamprecht, M., Fischer, A., & Stamm, H.-P. (2012). *Sportvereine in der Schweiz. Strukturen, Leistungen, Herausforderungen*. Zürich, Switzerland: Seismo.